



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546



### Determination of Effect on Historic Properties

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**Author:** C. Scott Speal **Date:** January 17, 2023

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**Project:** State No.: 95-258  
F.A.P. No.: 6095(033)  
Project Title: Replacement of Bridge #05263  
Town: New Milford

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**Finding of Effect:** No Historic Properties Affected

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#### *Project Description:*

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), with funding support from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes replacement of State Bridge Number 05263 carrying Sand Road over the West Aspetuck River in the Town of New Milford. Bridge Number 05263 is a single-span, steel girder structure built in 1983 characterized by reinforced concrete abutments and wingwalls, a reinforced concrete slab deck, concrete curbs, metal beam guiderail, and railing comprised of metal posts topped by wood rails. The bridge has a maximum span length of approximately 27' and measures 32' long, 19'7" curb-to-curb, and 23' wide overall. The skew angle is 30 degrees. The structure carries two lanes of traffic, one in each direction, and lacks shoulders or sidewalks. Metal beam rails protect the approaches at all four quadrants, though these are not tied into the sides of the bridge.

The Department has determined that the existing structure will be completely replaced with an open-span superstructure on a new pile-supported substructure. The replacement structure and reconstructed roadway will be located mostly upon the same alignment as the existing bridge, with the vertical profile slightly raised. The span length of the bridge is expected to increase. The road will be closed during construction with a detour in place. Staging storage and layup is expected to occur on the northeast approach to the bridge on a land parcel owned by the Town.

Under the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement executed between CTDOT, FHWA, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer (CT SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for minor transportation projects<sup>1</sup>, the Office of Environmental Planning (OEP) intends to make a determination of effect on historic properties for the described undertaking.

***Resources Potentially Affected:***

***Above Ground Structural Resources***

The NPGallery digital asset management database maintained by the National Park Service was consulted for the purpose of locating any historic properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in the project vicinity. No NRHP-listed structures were found to exist within a half-mile of the target bridge. Bridge Number 05263 itself, having been built less than 50 years ago, is categorized as Not Eligible for listing in the NRHP in OEP's latest historic bridge inventory update research and qualified cultural resource staff concur with this assessment.

A series of historic maps and aerial photographs obtained from the University of Connecticut Map and Geographical Information Center (MAGIC) were examined to assess the potential for previously unidentified historic properties to be located within the project area of potential effect (APE). The 1930 Griswold-Spiess Map of reconstructed Native settlement in Connecticut circa 1625 depicts no concentrations of indigenous population in the project vicinity during the period of European Contact. The 1811 Warren Map of Connecticut presents no concentrations of post-Contact settlement in the area during the Federal Period, aside from a grist and woolen mill on the Aspetuck River above and below the APE respectively. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century the bridge area was a relatively well settled crossroads of rural residential development as evidenced by the 1854 Hopkins Map of Litchfield County. The antecedent of Long Mountain Road is already in place by that time, as is Sand Road with a crossing over the river in the same general location as the present bridge. No structures are depicted within the project APE, however, in this document. By 1874, there is a rural farmstead attributed to McEwen not far to the north of the APE (Image 1).

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<sup>1</sup> *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Implementation of Minor Transportation Projects*, signed October 26, 2012 and revised May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Accessible online at: [www.ct.gov/culturalresources](http://www.ct.gov/culturalresources)



Image 1: 1874 historic map of project site and vicinity. Approximate project area identified in red.

Throughout the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, a rural residence stood on the north side of Long Mountain Road at the approximate location of the 'McEwen' property in the earlier maps. The surrounding area, however, remained mostly undeveloped as cleared agricultural land during that period, as evidenced by aerial photos from 1934 and 1965 (Images 2 & 3). None of these structures are presently evident in recent roadside and aerial photos, having apparently been removed for more modern, suburban residences.



Image 2: 1934 aerial image of project site and vicinity. Approximate project area identified in red.



Image 3: 1965 aerial image of project site and vicinity. Approximate project area identified in red.

### *Below Ground Archaeological Resources*

Digital site records maintained by the Office of the State Archaeologist, as well as OEP's own internally maintained cultural resource geodatabase, were consulted for the purpose of identifying any previously known archaeological sites within the APE. State Site Number 96-151—remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century stone masonry pig pen—was identified during a formal field survey completed in advance of replacement of the bridge carrying Long Mountain Road over the West Aspetuck River in 2002<sup>2</sup>. This feature is located on the south side of Long Mountain Road approximately 300' northeast of the bridge—well outside of the present project APE.

Soil classification maps obtained from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service were examined in conjunction with predictive models developed internally at OEP to assess the sensitivity of the project area for previously unknown pre-European Contact indigenous resources. Virtually the entire project area falls upon sandy loams at slight to moderate grade predicted to be high in archaeological potential. LiDAR imagery obtained from UConn MAGIC tended to confirm that relatively level potentially natural soils lay at several approaches to the bridge just above the riverbank (Image 4).

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<sup>2</sup> CHPC no. 823, *Archaeological Reconnaissance of the Vicinity of the Long Mountain Road #1 Bridge, State Project No. 95-231, Bridge No. 05112*. Raber Associates 1999. Report on field at CT SHPO.

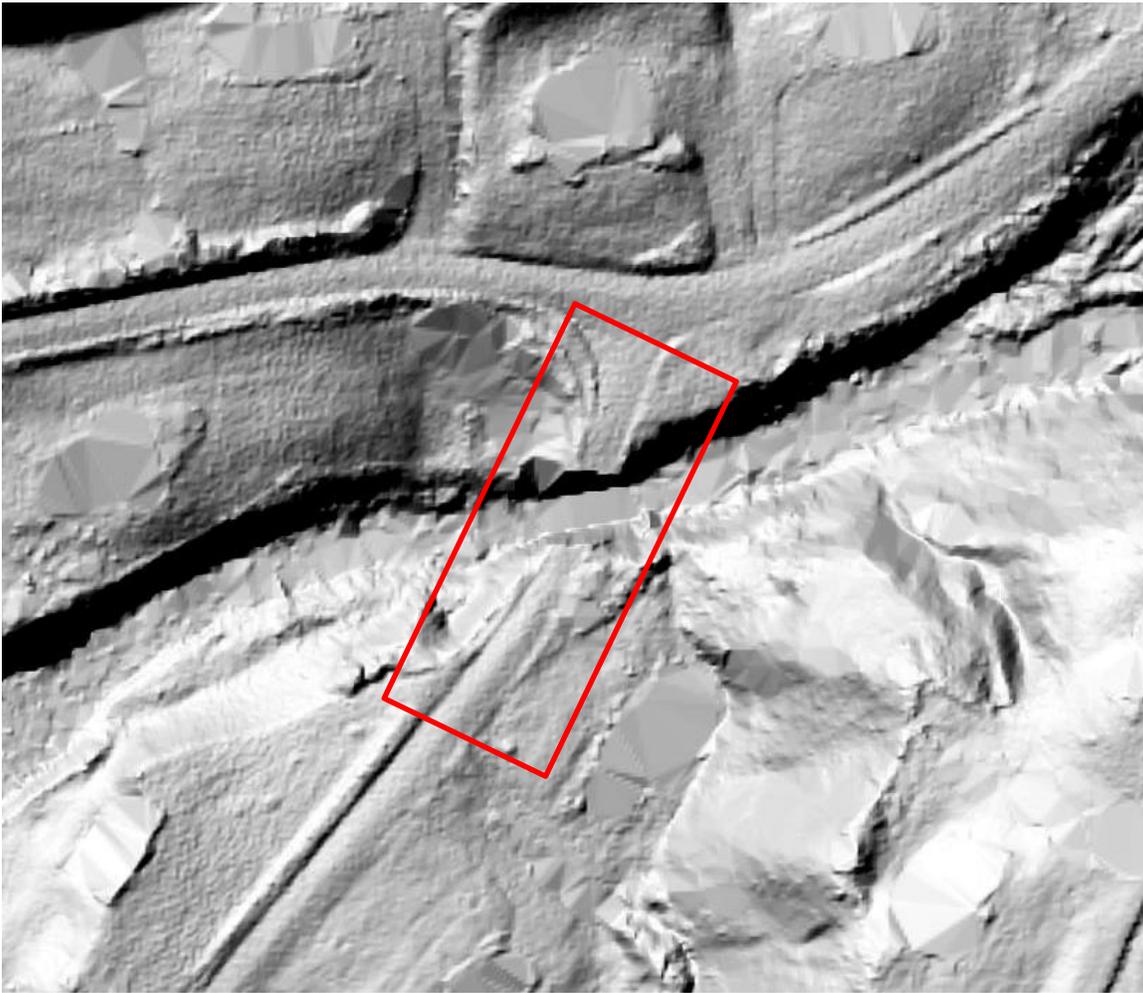


Image 4: 2016 LiDAR image of project site and vicinity. Approximate project area identified in red.

A formal Phase I archaeological assessment and reconnaissance survey was therefore conducted in October of this year at the discretion of the project proponents by Heritage Consultants operating out of Berlin, Connecticut. Despite excavation of nine (9) shovel tests across the project APE, no cultural material of historic significance was encountered. Much of the area was found to be heavily disturbed by previous road and bridge construction episodes. OEP therefore sees no impacts to archaeological resources in association with the proposed undertaking.

***Determination of Effect:***

Consultation was carried out with Federally-recognized Native American Tribal authorities with ancestral ties to the State of Connecticut for this undertaking in December of 2022. None of the solicited Tribes responded to the invitation with any concerns about the project.

Given the lack of historic properties found to exist within the project APE in the course of background assessment and a formal field reconnaissance survey, OEP hereby determines that there will be *no historic properties affected* in association with the present undertaking. With this determination, FHWA, through OEP, has

concluded its responsibility to consider the potential effects of the described project on cultural resources under Section 106 of the NHPA via the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement referenced above.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CSE', with a horizontal line underneath it.

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Office of Environmental Planning  
Connecticut Department of Transportation